United Nations E/C.19/2006/L.3/Add.3

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
23 May 2006

Original: English

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Fifth session
New York, 15-26 May 2006
Agenda item 4 (f)
Ongoing priorities and themes: half-day discussion on Africa

Draft recommendations submitted by the Rapporteur

Half-day discussion on Africa

1. In Africa, the expression "indigenous peoples" gives rise to questions. Few African countries recognize the existence of indigenous peoples in their States. Even fewer recognize them in their constitutions or national legislations. The African populations that identify themselves as "indigenous" participate in various economic systems and are namely hunter-gatherers, nomads, pastoralists, as well as small-scale agriculturalists. The situation in Africa is diverse and complex and varies from country to country and community to community. While certain States and certain communities have made improvements, there are numerous pending challenges. The expropriation of lands and natural resources constitutes a major problem faced by indigenous peoples. In several regions occupied by indigenous peoples, infrastructures are missing or inadequate. Social services, such as schools and health centres are few and deficient and roads and physical infrastructures are also lacking.

2. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues recognizes that the report of the working group of experts on indigenous populations/communities, which was adopted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, constitutes a highly important instrument for the advancement of the human rights of indigenous peoples.

3. The Permanent Forum welcomes the contributions of the Governments that participated in the thematic discussion on Africa held during its fifth session and encourages all African Governments to contribute to the dialogue.

4. The Permanent Forum urges States to review their policy on decentralization, with a view to bringing them in line with international laws and adapting them to the specificities of nomadic peoples.

5. The Permanent Forum urges African States, in coordination with the African Union, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the

06-35887 (E) 240506

organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to support organize two regional conferences/seminars in Africa, one for French-speaking States and the other for English-speaking States, to enhance the capacity of indigenous organizations to engage in dialogues with Governments at the country level and to promote an improved understanding of indigenous issues, including through teaching indigenous languages at schools, recognizing and sustaining indigenous knowledge systems and partnerships between States and indigenous peoples on the protection of conservation areas, and inter-agency consultation on poverty reduction strategies and on designing a regional strategy to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

6. The Permanent Forum urges the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to coordinate their regional strategies and programmes to implement the Permanent Forum's recommendations in Africa.

7. The Permanent Forum urges the World Health Organization, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to convene a consultative process in Africa with indigenous women, including rural and nomadic women, to (a) define indicators of gender equality and poverty eradication; (b) define a human rights approach to maternal health and the reduction of child mortality, and (c) to discuss criteria on how indigenous peoples should be addressed in the census process.

8. The Permanent Forum urges African States to integrate indigenous traditional institutions into the processes of democratization and to bring them in line with human rights standards.

9. The Permanent Forum urges the international community to pay particular attention to the situation of the Batwa peoples, in particular Batwa women, and to support the inclusion of the San people and other indigenous groups in the national census. The Permanent Forum urges African States and their international development partners to review the poverty reduction strategy papers and other frameworks to integrate the specificities of such indigenous peoples as the Batwa, Pygmies, Touaregue, Amazigh, Khoisan, and other hunter-gatherers or nomadic peoples in their countries, both in Central and Southern Africa.

10. The Permanent Forum urges the international financial institutions to conduct social and environmental impact assessments for their projects in certain countries in Central Africa before undertaking/funding any projects.

11. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights works together with the Permanent Forum to engage African States in a dialogue with indigenous peoples.

12. The Permanent Forum recommends that Governments, indigenous organizations, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and bilateral donors work together to collect disaggregated data on Africa's indigenous peoples and their poverty situation and to report thereon to the Permanent Forum at its sixth session. The World Bank made a commitment at the Conference on Poverty and Indigenous Peoples (New York, 9-10 May 2006) to further collaborate with the Inter-Agency Support Group to collect disaggregated data.

13. The Permanent Forum recommends that the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and Member States organize a regional consultation with indigenous organizations and interested donors to develop a more coordinated, sustainable and longer-term programme in the region that has as its principal objective the strengthening of indigenous organizations to ensure that they have the technical capacity to engage with Governments and the international community on human rights.

14. The Permanent Forum urges the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to focus and coordinate their strategies and programmes to deal with the problems faced by indigenous peoples in Africa relevant to the mandate of the Permanent Forum on such issues as economic and social development, education, health, human rights, culture and the environment.

15. The Permanent Forum reinforces its institutional relationship with the Human Rights Council on all matters relevant to their mandates.

16. The Permanent Forum urges African Governments to take into account standing reports on the retention of traditional knowledge developed by indigenous peoples and government representatives during the Convention on Biological Diversity process.

17. The Permanent Forum calls on African Governments to formalize their recognition of African knowledge systems, in particular indigenous peoples' expertise in this regard, including medicinal knowledge. Indigenous knowledge systems should be included in formal education. Indigenous peoples should participate in the sustainable management of biodiversity, as well as ensure the sustainability of their economies, cultures, languages and knowledge systems.

18. The Permanent Forum urges African Governments to recognize and respect indigenous peoples' rights by including them in the planning and implementation of development projects in their lands. It is important to respect free, prior and informed consent in all processes.

19. The Permanent Forum urges African States to protect indigenous peoples from armed conflicts on the continent, with the assistance of peacekeeping forces in affected areas.

20. The Permanent Forum urges donor agencies to implement monitoring mechanisms to reduce the negative impact of agricultural projects on nomadic peoples.

21. The Permanent Forum urges the World Bank and other multilateral agencies to address the negative impact and ineffectiveness of mechanisms to protect the rights of indigenous peoples, as in the cases of the Chad-Cameroon and the Niger Delta pipelines.

22. The Permanent Forum requests African States, under the auspices of the African Union, to urgently organize a regional workshop on a situation analysis of the general state of health in order to establish a monitoring system on HIV/AIDS, malaria, such recurrent diseases as diabetes, and diseases linked to the excessive use of tobacco and consumption of alcohol.